

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

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NEWS RELEASE

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Davis and Norton Introduce Reauthorization of District of Columbia College Access Act

Program Has Helped Send Thousands of Students to College

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Tom Davis (R-VA) and Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) today introduced H.R. 4855, legislation to reauthorize the popular District of Columbia College Access Act for an additional five years.

As evidenced by more than 6,500 D.C. students who have used the programs grants to attend colleges and universities across the country, as well as the proposed \$35 million for program in the President's fiscal year 2007 budget, the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Program is one of the few undeniably successfully federal programs.

"Helping to create the D.C. Tuition Assistance Program in 1999, and watching its long-term success, is something I am very proud of," Davis said. "The bipartisan support across both chambers of Congress for this program is evident, and I'm hopeful that we will extend this program for the next class of future college students from the District of Columbia."

In 2004, Congress reauthorized the College Access Act for an additional two years, through fiscal 2007. That means that the Tuition Assistance Program is authorized for the current appropriations cycle, but Congress must act to reauthorize the Program for fiscal years 2008 through 2012 to ensure that the President's budget proposal next year provides sufficient funding for the Program.

Davis and Norton sponsored the original College Access legislation in to provide financial assistance to D.C. high school graduates pursuing higher education opportunities in colleges and universities in other States. The legislation levels the playing field by making up for the District of Columbia's lack of a state university system – a benefit available to high school graduates in the rest of the nation. It also helps deter tax-paying families from leaving the District to take advantage of in-state tuition rates elsewhere.

The Tuition Assistance Program applies to District of Columbia residents who have graduated from high school and are seeking an undergraduate degree. It covers the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates, up to \$10,000 per year, at public colleges and universities in other States. Additionally, the Program provides \$2,500 annually in tuition assistance to D.C. residents who attend private colleges and universities in the counties surrounding the District. Finally, an amendment to the legislation in 2001 authorized the Program to provide \$2,500 annually to D.C. high school graduates who attend private Historically Black Colleges and Universities throughout the country.

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